

THE HABILIMENTS OF GRIEF, FROM A COMMERCIAL POINT OF VIEW.

On the occasion of a recent visit to London, whilst I was debating with myself over the breakfast things as to how I should spend the day, I received by the post a letter deeply bordered with black, evidently a messenger of affliction. I tore the white weeping willow upon a black background which formed the device upon the seal, and read the contents. It proved to be an intimation from a relative of the sudden death of her brother-in-law, and a request that under the circumstance of the sudden bereavement of the widow, I should undertake certain sad commissions relative to the articles of mourning required by the family.

I at once set out upon my sad errand. I had no difficulty in finding the *maison de deuil* to which I had been referred. It met me in the sad habiliments of woe; no vulgar colors glared from the shop-windows, no gilding amazed with its festive brightness. The name of the firm scarce presumed to make itself seen in letters of the saddest gray upon a black ground. Here and there beads of white set off the general gloom of the house-front, like the crape pipings of a widow's cap. The very metal window-frames and plates had gone into a decorous mourning—zinc taking the place of what we feel under the circumstances would have been quite out of character—brass.

On my pushing the plate-glass door it gave way with a hushed and muffled sound, and I was met by a gentleman of sad expression, who, in the most sympathetic voice, inquired the nature of my want, and, on my explaining myself, directed me to the Inconsolable Grief Department. The interior of the establishment answered exactly to the appearance without. The long passage I had to traverse was panelled in white-black borderings, like so many mourning-cards placed on end; and I was rapidly becoming impressed with the deep solemnity of the place, when I caught sight of a neat little figure rolling up some ribbon; who, on my inquiring if I had arrived at the Inconsolable Grief Department, replied, almost in a tone of gayety, that that was the half-mourning counter, and that I must proceed further on until I had passed the repository for widows' silk. Following her directions, I at last reached my destination—a large room draped in black, with a hushed atmosphere about it as though somebody was lying invisibly there in state.

An attendant in sable habiliments, picked out with the inevitable white tie, and with an undertakerish eye and manner, awaited my commands. I produced my written directions. Scanning it critically, he said:—

"Permit me to inquire, sir, if *it* is a deceased partner?" I nodded assent.

"We take the liberty of asking this distressing question," he continued, "as we are extremely anxious to keep up the character of our establishment by matching, as it were, the exact shade of affliction. Our paramatta and crapes give satisfaction to the deepest woe. Permit me to show you a new texture of surpassing beauty and elegance, manufactured specially for this house, and which we call the *inconsolable*. Quite a novelty in the trade, I do assure you, sir."

With this he placed a pasteboard box before me full of mourning fabrics.

"Is this it?" I inquired, lifting a lugubrious piece of drapery.

"Oh, no," he replied; "the one you have in your hand was manufactured for last year's affliction, and was termed 'The Stunning Blow Shade.' It makes up

well, however, with our *sudden bereavement* silk—a leading article—and our *distraction* trimmings."

"I fear," said I, "my commission says nothing about these novelties."

"Ladies in the country," he blandly replied, "don't know of the perfection to which the art of mourning genteelly has been brought! But I will see that your commission is attended to to the letter." Giving another glance over my list, he observed: "Oh! I perceive a widow's cap is mentioned here. I must trouble you, sir, to proceed to the Weeds Department for that article—the first turning to the left."

Proceeding, as directed, I came to a recess fitted up with a solid phalanx of widows' caps. I perceived at a glance that they exhausted the whole gamut of grief, from its deepest shade to that tone which is expressive of a pleasing melancholy. The foremost row confronted me with the sad liveries of crape folds, whilst those behind gradually faded off into light, ethereal tarletan, and one or two of the outsiders were even breaking out into worldly feathers and flaunting weepers. Forgetting the proprieties of the moment, I inquired of the grave attendant if one of the latter would be suitable.

"Oh! no, sir," she replied, with a slight shade of severity in the tone of her voice; "you may gradually work up to that in a year or two. But any of these"—pointing to the first row of widows' weeds—"are suitable for the first burst of grief."

Aquiescing in the propriety of this sliding scale of sorrow, I selected some weeds expressive of the deepest dejection I could find, and, having completed my commission, inquired where I could procure for myself some lavender gloves.

"Oh! for those things, sir," she said, in the voice of Tragedy speaking to Comedy, "you must turn to your right, and you will come to the Complimentary Mourning counter."

Turning to the right accordingly, I was surprised, and not a little shocked, to find myself amongst worldly colors. Tender lavender I had expected; but violet, mauve, and even absolute red, stared me in the face. Thinking I had made a mistake, I was about to retire, when a young lady, in a cheerful tone of voice, inquired if I wanted anything in her department.

"I was looking for the Complimentary Mourning counter," I replied, "for some gloves; but I fear I am wrong."

"You are quite right, sir," she observed. "This is it." She saw my eye glance at the cheerful-colored silks, and with the instinctive tact of a woman guessed my thoughts in a moment.

"Mauve, sir, is very appropriate for the lighter sorrows."

"But absolute red!" I retorted, pointing to some velvet of that color.

"Is quite admissible when you mourn the departure of a distant relative. But allow me to show you some gloves?" and, suiting the action to the word, she lifted the cover from a tasteful glovebox, and displayed a perfect picture of delicate half-tones, indicative of a struggle between the cheerful and the sad.

"There is a pleasing melancholy in this shade of gray," she remarked, indenting slightly each outer knuckle with the soft elastic kid as she measured my hand.

"Can you find a lavender?"

"Oh yes! but the sorrow tint is very slight in that; however, it wears admirably."

Thus by degrees the grief of the establishment died out in tenderest lavender, and I took my departure, deeply impressed with the charming improvements which Parisian taste has effected in the plain old-fashioned style of English mourning. L. B.

THE FIRST NEWSPAPER.—The first published, says *Galignani*, bears the date of Nuremberg, 1457; the first English one was in 1622; and the first French in 1631. A very ancient printed sheet was offered for sale in the Libri collection, and of which a duplicate exists in the British Museum. It is entitled, "Neue Zeitung, aus Hispanan und Italien" (News from Spain and Italy), and bears the date of February, 1534. The catalogue gave the following description of it: "An exceedingly rare journal, which appears to have been printed at Nuremberg. It contains the first announcement of the discovery of Peru, and has remained unknown to all the bibliographers that we have been able to consult. In this printed sheet it is said that the Governor of Panumyra (Panama) in the Indies, wrote to his majesty (Charles V.) that a vessel had arrived from Peru, with a letter from the Regent, Francisco Piscara (Pizarro), announcing that he had taken possession of the country; that with about 200 Spaniards, infantry and cavalry, he had repaired to the possessions of a great seignor named Cassiko (who refused peace), and attacked him, that the Spaniards were the victors, and that he had seized upon 5000 castillions (gold pieces), and of 20,000 silver marks, and lastly, that he had obtained 2,000,000 in gold from the said Cassiko."

SOMETHING ABOUT MUSK AS A PERFUME.—When "boarding round" was the fashion with school teachers, Farmer A., on coming to the house at tea-time, was introduced to the "school-ma'am." In a moment he perceived a strong odor of musk, which came from the school-ma'am's clothing. He, entirely ignorant of the cause, immediately charged it on Ponto, who had a strong propensity for hunting muskrats, and at once commanded him: "Ponto, you scamp, you have been killing muskrats; go out of doors, sir, and get sweetened off." But Ponto did not stir, and Farmer A. spoke again more sharply: "Get out, you'll scent the whole house!" The school-ma'am, by this time, was blushing red as crimson, while the girls and the boys could scarcely keep from bursting into laughter. One of them, unnoticed, at last made their father understand how the matter stood, and he, of course, dropped the subject. The evening passed away rather awkwardly with all, and the teacher failed to return the next day. On her account the affair was kept quiet until after she left the neighborhood, when many were the hearty laughs had over Farmer A.'s error and the school-ma'am's discomfiture. She omitted musk thereafter.

MESSRS. J. E. TILTON & Co., Boston, have for sale all materials for the different styles of Painting and Drawing taught in their book, *ART RECREATIONS*. They will send a price list, if requested, and answer necessary questions, and will send, post paid, the book for \$2 00. It teaches Pencil and Crayon Drawing, Oil Painting of every kind, Wax-work, Leather-work, Water Color Painting, and hundreds of fancy kinds of drawing, painting, etc. etc.

A GENTLEMAN lately returned from London, says, the year there is four months of winter, and eight months of villainous weather.

THE UNFORTUNATE MUSIC SCHOLAR.

BY MRS. J. N. PAGE.

"The ground is all covered with ice and sleet, Caro," said her sister Bell; "do come back and get your rubbers before you undertake to cross the street!"

"But I am so late, Bell, and you know I was tardy the last time I took a music lesson, and such a scolding as I got, I never wish to hear again. I believe I'll trust my old friends Care and Good Luck for a safe footing." So taking Bertini's large instruction book, and a bound volume of sheet music with her own name on the cover, she tripped gayly down the steps and on to the icy pavement. Men hastening to their various avocations were slipping and sliding, and grasping each other's hands to balance themselves. Seeing her old friend Gen'l P. coming down the street, and fearing he might fancy a joke at her expense, she quickened her steps. But haste is often a poor aid to gravity. One, two, three efforts of the provoked little beauty to keep her feet, but all in vain. Away went the centre of gravity over the base, and books and maiden were brought low.

While many a young cavalier was preparing to come to her assistance, the General kindly raised her to her feet, placed her books in her hands, and herself on the steps of her music teacher's door, saying playfully:—

"Well, Miss Music Scholar, what do you call that? A flat or a sharp?"

"It's a flat," said the tearful, pouting, rosy-cheeked maiden, "but don't say anything about it."

Her teacher kindly met her at the door, and soon, in harmony's soul-thrilling strains, she, for the time being, forgot the mishap of the morning.

Young ladies, when you would trust yourselves on the slippery pavements without rubbers, remember Caro.

INFLUENCE OF FEMALES.—It is better for you to pass an evening once or twice a week in a lady's drawing-room, even though the conversation is slow, and you know the girl's song by heart, than in a club, tavern, or the pit of a theatre. All amusements of youth to which virtuous women are not admitted, rely on it, are deleterious to their nature. All men who avoid female society have dull perceptions and are stupid, or have gross tastes, and revolt against what is pure. Your club swaggers, who are sucking the butts of billiard cues all night, call female society insipid. Poetry is uninspiring to a yokel; beauty has no charms for a blind man; music does not please a poor beast who does not know one tune from another; but as a true epicure is hardly ever tired of water, sancey, and brown bread and butter, I protest I can sit for a whole night talking to a well-regulated, kindly woman about her girl Fanny or her boy Frank, and like the evening's entertainment. One of the great benefits a man may derive from woman's society is that he is bound to be respectful to her. The habit is of great good to your moral men, depend upon it. Our education makes of us the most eminently selfish men in the world. We fight for ourselves, we push for ourselves, we yawn for ourselves, we light our pipes and say we won't go out, we prefer ourselves and our ease; and the greatest benefit that comes to a man from a woman's society is, that he has to think of somebody to whom he is bound to be constantly attentive and respectful.

A LADY impatiently awaiting the arrival of her lover, moved the hands of the clock forward an hour to make the time for his appearance come sooner.